

## Aliso Viejo Girls Softball Coach Handbook

AVGS wants to thank you for volunteering to coach our young athletes. Coaches are essential to the game. Coaches not only teach our athletes foundational skills essential to success on the diamond—coaches create the environment necessary for our athletes to develop self confidence and core principles of teamwork and good sportsmanship essential to success in life. Our young athletes will quickly become part of your “family.” It is our goal to provide you with all necessary tools, resources and education. Understand the most important tools you already possess—patience, compassion and dedication. Thanks again and we will see you on the field.

### AVGS Mission and Vision Statements

Aliso Viejo Girls Softball (AVGS) is a non-profit organization completely run by volunteer and sponsorship support and participation. Our mission is to provide every athlete in our league a fun, safe and skills-based environment to participate in and contribute to.

**We are committed** to teaching and growing our youth into team players who are challenged in their athletic ability both physically and mentally.

**We are committed** to encourage, promote and require good sportsmanship, good conduct and a strong commitment from every athlete, coach, manager and family member that participates in our league both on and off the field.

**We are committed** to building character and healthy friendships and to instill a lifestyle of service, discipline and positive attitudes that will be displayed not only in our league, but carried into our families, our schools and our community.

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## Coaching 101

AVGS is dependent on volunteers, not unlike other non-profit youth organizations. Without volunteers giving up precious free time for your family—for the benefit of all the athletes in AVGS—our league would not exist. Coaches are the volunteer pillars providing the framework for the structure of AVGS. Experienced coaches understand you “pay it forward” for love of the sport and love of all children—because often you will receive more grief than smiles regardless of your effort. It takes a special person to be a true coach. There are simply far too few true coaches. AVGS needs you.

### Build YOUR Team Before Draft Day

It is hard to be a good manager without understanding the importance of a well-balanced team. A well-balanced team starts with your coaching staff. While you cannot determine the identities of the individuals on your coaching staff prior to the draft, you can determine the types of individuals necessary to your staff.

At a minimum, you will need an assistant coach and a team parent

**Assistant Coach:** The Assistant Coach is the “right hand” for a Manager. He or she will help the Manager and work alongside the Manager at practices and games, understanding and reinforcing the Manager's methodology and plan. While a Manager focuses on the entire team, an Assistant Coach works in ensuring each athlete understands the Manager's methodology and plan. When the Manager is absent, an Assistant Coach may assume the Manager's role for a practice or a game. Teams typically have at least two Assistant Coaches in addition to the Manager—a field/base coach and a dugout coach. More coaches may be necessary on younger teams (6U or 8U) to help further develop your athletes as softball players.

**Team Parent:** Consider your Team Parent your “off-field” executive assistant. An effective Team Parent will free up your time by addressing various administrative duties (e.g. setting up your team website, ordering your practice shirts, ordering your team banner, circulating schedules/reminders, etc.). Your team parent should only be communicating messages subject to your oversight involving events and training within your team and AVGS, beverages/snacks/food, fundraising opportunities, and relaying the information that may come out through the board of directors. You will also want to assign your team calendar set up and upkeep for your Team Parent. You can easily supply your Team Parent with the AVGS schedule(s) to allow for the input onto your team website and/or to circulate. We recommend using your Team Parent as much as possible to relieve you from administrative duties and allow for focus on the actual “managing” of your team. For an additional understanding of the role of the Team Parent consider: <http://alisoviejogirlssoftball.com/team-parent-responsibilities/>

If you are blessed with a multitude of involved parents, consider assigning additional assistant coaching positions (e.g., bullpen/pitching; batting practice/hitting; infield/outfield; etc.) Ensure you provide the guidance and outline any expectations to maintain a consistent methodology and plan for your team. Keep in mind this is also **your** staff only. Your **team** will still need other “off-field” roles filled (e.g., scorekeeper; field preparation; photography; etc.).

### ***Evaluation Day***

AVGS will provide you the “time slot” (e.g., day/time/location) for the evaluation of athletes in your division. Arrive at least 15 minutes early so you can get your clipboard with the roster and situated in the field.

First, each athlete will perform basic drills to be evaluated on hitting, running, infielding and outfielding.

Second, following completion of basic drills, there will be an evaluation for pitchers and catchers.

Understand you will witness a range of skills through evaluations ranging from seasoned softball players to young athletes essentially holding a bat for the first time. Make notes of all it (e.g., skill level; attitude/enthusiasm; etc.) because you may see something no other manager saw during evaluations. There will always be “a diamond in the rough” only you will recognize on Evaluation Day.

You should be able to create a “draft plan” with the information you gather from the roster (e.g., previous years playing; other leagues; all-star players; days they can’t practice; etc.) combined with your review of the individual athletes during their evaluation. Look to create a plan to draft a team that you believe will work for your coaching methodology/plan combined with the need to fill certain skill positions.<sup>1</sup> Create your plan quickly following evaluations—both because information will be “fresh” in your mind and because you will only have about 24 hours before Draft Day.

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<sup>1</sup> In creating your “draft plan”, understand at the outset that different “skill” positions are more (or less) important to “success on the scoreboard” depending on the level of play. Coaches may value other traits more or less depending on their methodology/plan (e.g., “coachability”; fielding; throwing; running; hitting; etc.) and rank their players/draft order accordingly. Understand further that pitchers are always important and catchers are particularly important in 10U and above based on base stealing and home plate being “open.” Also remember you will be “drafting” your assistant coaches (which may lead you to draft a player differently depending on the importance you place in having a particular person as your assistant coach).

## **Draft Day**

You will be assigned a date/time/location for your division on Draft Day. Make sure you show up around 15 minutes early, as the division drafting before yours might end early and your division will be able to get going once all managers are seated. You will be asked to draw your draft spot and with a board member present (either immediately following Player Evaluations or immediately before the draft) and you will begin the process in corresponding draft order (e.g., conducted in a “snake” fashion...round 1 = 1-7; round 2 = 7-1; etc.). After the draft is complete, you will be asked to select your uniform and you will also be given the opportunity to select your practice day(s).

## **Get Organized, Stay Organized**

In order to be a good manager, one of the first items on the agenda is organization. *You simply must be organized in order to succeed.* With the draft behind you and an official roster, you will have a complete list of team members, contact numbers, and emails. Every time you and your coaches sit down to contact parents, you must make every effort to communicate the desired message to the *entire* team. Communication is a key to success.

## **Making Contact – Post Draft**

The Manager should make the first communication to each individual athlete/family on a team. Your coaches can make calls in the future, but the first contact should be made by you to establish that you are the primary contact. *It is suggested to do this first call within 24 hours of the end of the draft to ensure each team is on schedule within AVGS.*

The first communication should be a simple introduction. A long or detailed conversation with each parent (e.g., reviewing your “resume”; explaining your coaching philosophy or expectations of athletes; etc.) at this time is *not* recommended.

Consider creating a script for yourself. By example, such a script may be limited to stating: (a) who you are; (b) your position as manager; (c) your excitement/anticipation to coach their athlete and the team; (d) mandatory (and optional) practice day(s)/time(s)<sup>2</sup>; (e) the basic equipment necessary for season (e.g., bat; helmet; glove; softball cleats); (f) the need for volunteers (e.g., assistant coach(es); team parent; scorekeeper; field preparation; etc.); and (g) the date/time for the initial team meeting (e.g., when you will discuss “details” and address any questions). You will also want to confirm their email addresses and phone numbers (of both

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<sup>2</sup> AVGS allows parent input into what days are best suited for practice for their athlete/family. However, you will need to do what is best for your overall team. Obviously your free days are the starting point; from there you need to coordinate field times with the other managers. On draft day, the first pick for player selection is the last pick for practice time. If parents express concern because their kid cannot make that day, explain to them that based on what the registration papers identified for all players, this was the best case scenario to try and accommodate everyone’s busy schedules. You need to understand that there will be days where you are missing players; parents also need to understand this and you can provide them resources for working with their child when they can’t be there.

parents when possible) to ensure communications are always possible. Since you will also have selected your team color during the draft, you might want to relay that information and ask that their athlete consider some ideas for the name of their team so they can bring their idea to their first practice.

It is always best to follow-up your first communication with an email to the entire team. By doing so, you will effectively close “the gap” by confirming all parents received the same basic team communication. In this email you will also have the opportunity to further explain the many volunteers needed to ensure a successful season (e.g., assistant coaching; team parents; scorekeeping; field preparation; etc.). Volunteers should contact you directly. Do *not* commit to anyone until you send discuss with them and/or detail the job responsibilities for these roles. Thereafter request their *firm* commitment to you and the team. You want volunteers who will work for you and *all* your athletes.

### **Your First Practice**

Create a detailed practice plan for your first practice. Each coach will run practices differently and uniquely. There is no single way a practice (or team) should be organized. That being stated, certain “basic” segments exist to any successful “first” practice: (a) introductions; (b) team rules/expectations; (c) warm-up; (d) skill development/assessment (e.g., utilizing different methods to determine what skills need more/less emphasis on in developing your team).<sup>3</sup>

Plan to arrive 10-15 minutes before every practice. Understand parents will arrive at all different times (e.g., early; on-time; late) regardless of the “official” start time. If you arrive just at the start time it means you will not be ready on time. This will cost your team valuable practice time (e.g., 5-10 minutes as you move equipment to the field, set up, gather the team, etc.). You will be “off balance” effectively trying to catch up with your practice plan the rest of practice. Hall of Fame football coach Vince Lombardi said that you are not really on time unless you are on the field, ready to go at least fifteen minutes before practice begins. This applies to coaches more than it does to players!

Following practice, plan on meeting with your parents for about 15 minutes to address any questions and set the expectations for the season. Feel free to give a brief background on yourself, your coaching experience and your coaching philosophy. Just keep it short and to the point. Also introduce your assistant coach(es), team parent, and any other volunteers if already determined.<sup>4</sup> You may also reiterate the practice schedule and what they can expect to see in one of your practices. The goal of the meeting should be to engender confidence within the parents on your team in your leadership and your “plan” to help the athletes improve

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<sup>3</sup> Practice plans and “segments” are discussed further in the next section.

<sup>4</sup> If any volunteer positions have not been determined, you can either ask for volunteers or assign roles. Assigning roles often makes individuals instantly accountable and engaged. Consider “eye contact” when selecting. (e.g., if an individual is making “eye contact” with you the individual is generally more likely to be engaged in the role assigned).

individually and as a team. Allow 5 minutes at the end for parents to ask questions, keep your answers short and to the point.

### ***Structuring Practices***

Take time to write down your practice plan. If you have assistant coaches, make them a copy so they know where you are in practice. Structure it in such a way to maximize your time on the field. If you go into practice unprepared, your team will leave practice unprepared. The practice plan will help maintain focus and avoid “time management” issues (e.g., too much/too little time spent on a particular drill or skill). A slow-moving or unfocused practice will create an impression of a coach or coaches that simply do not know what they are doing.

Practices need to be broken down into segments. Each segment does not have to be a specific length. By example, a 90-minute practice broken down into either 15-minute segments (e.g., 6 total) or 30-minute segments (e.g., 3 total) provides a good general outline. Consider the following general practice plan/outline:

**WARM-UP (5-10 minutes):** Each practice should begin with a warm-up and stretching. You or your coaches may initially team a foundational warm-up for the athletes to follow (e.g., “team” stretches in a circle; simple “team” jog incorporating various stretches; etc.). Choose some type of dynamic warm-up for your athletes to follow and they can “own” it as the season progresses (e.g., a different athlete can lead warm-up each practice). Never take the field cold—get the blood pumping.

**FOUNDATIONAL DRILLS (20-25 minutes):** Each practice should also incorporate certain drills focused on developing foundational skills necessary to develop as a softball player. Basic throwing/catching drills (e.g., 20 throws/catches at 20, 30 and 40 feet; bare handed ground balls; relays; etc.). Make sure you initially explain the drill verbally, then model or have an athlete model what you want them to do. Ensure the athletes are getting “good repetitions” (e.g., throwing/catching correctly).<sup>5</sup> Give the drills names, this way as you do them each practice, you can just say the name of the drill and the girls know what they are supposed to do.

**SPECIFIC SKILL DRILL(S) (30 minutes):** Choose a skill (e.g., ground balls; fly balls; throw downs; tagging; leading off/stealing; sliding; stealing home; fielding bunts; throws home; etc.) you want to focus on in your practice. Consider taking a skill or “best practice” detailed below. “Break the skill down” (e.g., show your athletes how you want them to do it) in a 5 minute segment. Incorporate a drill (or drills) to reinforce the skill. Allow time for the instruction of the drill. To confirm understanding of the drill, have

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<sup>5</sup> When explaining the drill, make sure they know exactly what they are focusing on. Show them the way you want it done and make sure they do it the right way. If you let them slide during a drill, then they will not get any better and all they will do is practice bad habits. As a coach, look for quality of work, not quantity. It is ok to make them go again to get it right.

athletes repeat or “go through” the drill. Incorporate your assistant coaches (and parents) to run a drill (allowing you to supervise), and use the drill in “multiple” stations if possible to keep the athletes moving, getting more “touches” and staying focused. An athlete standing is an athlete that is not getting better.

**BATTING (30 minutes):** Each practice should incorporate a batting segment (e.g., 15-30 minutes). Batting should be broken down into multiple “stations” (e.g., soft toss; bunting; tee; whiffle ball/live pitch; etc.) allowing the athletes to get as many swings as possible in the limited amount of time available. Utilize your assistant coaches and parents to the extent possible to allow for you to “supervise” each station.<sup>6</sup>

**SCRIMMAGE (25 minutes):** At the end of practice some type of “scrimmage” may be used to reinforce the skill(s) focused on at practice. A general scrimmage may be used as a “fall back” (e.g., each athlete hits off of a coach or pitcher). However, there are many derivatives and options (e.g., bunting only scrimmage; hitting off a tee; base-running only; etc.) to create a fun culmination to practice while reinforcing skills focused on at practice. Be creative!

**CONCLUSION (5 minutes):** At the end of practice, spend 5 minutes going over with your athletes what they learned. Give them an opportunity to say something they learned. Take this time to tell them how proud you are of their work and appreciate their efforts. Remind your athletes to continue to work on their own. Remind them when the time/location for your next practice and/or game. End with a cheer and “high-5’s” and call it a day!

Use the K.I.S.S. method (**Keep It Simple Sister**). Try to “teach” in “threes” to “fives” (e.g. break down a concept or skill into 3-5 basic things to remember). Too much “thinking” results in not enough “doing”...so keep it simple! Through the course of a season you are going to feel an urge to teach your athletes more and more complex skills. Resist this urge! Unless your athletes are truly advanced, they really need to focus on fundamentals (e.g., throwing; catching; fielding ground balls; fielding fly balls; hitting; bunting; baserunning; sliding). Always incorporate warm-ups/stretching, foundational drills (throwing/catching/fielding), and hitting segments into each practice. Consider modifying foundational drills to make them more challenging or interesting. Avoid dedicating a practice to solely hitting or fielding. Well-rounded teams are the result of well-rounded practices. Avoid at all times working on a single skill to the detriment of all others.

### ***Using Assistant Coaches***

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<sup>6</sup> It is recommended that coaches emphasize basic core concepts (e.g., feet set; bat back; chin down; level swing; swing hard; etc.) for their athletes to focus on while avoiding “over coaching” (understanding that each athlete will feel comfortable with a unique stance and “approach” at the plate). Batting is a very unique skill requiring the athlete to develop hand/eye coordination, quick reactions and confidence. Although reinforcing core concepts is necessary, recognize “over thinking” at the plate is often a result of “over coaching.”



Any successful team requires a lot of “help.” You cannot do it alone. Consider having two primary assistant coaches for practices and games (e.g., base coach; dugout coach). Multiple assistant coaches will give you a chance to bounce ideas off someone as well as get feedback. As the manager, you need to delegate duties to your assistant coaches. Explain your methodology and plan to ensure you are on the “same page.” Thereafter, give your Assistant Coaches specific practice and/or game duties (e.g., batting; pitching/bullpen; etc.). Always avoid giving a duty and thereafter “stepping on the toes” of the Assistant Coach by taking over. Stated another way, do not be a “micro” Manager. Remember that you asked them to help out, so let them help.

Assistant Coaches must also understand they should be supporting the Manager. There must be an “open door” policy for Assistant Coaches to communicate any thoughts, beliefs, observations and even disagreements to a Manager. That being stated, Managers and Assistant Coaches must understand to always avoid having such communications in front of the athletes and/or parents. Assistant Coaches must understand that a Manager may want to stick to the way he or she is doing something. Open communication, however, is in the best interest of the Manager and Assistant Coaches. Everyone is there to help and provide a safe environment that is fun and instructive for the athletes.

### ***Game Day***

DON'T OVER THINK IT! Easier said than done. You have seen how hard the girls have been working and you want them to succeed. It is easy to overcomplicate a “simple game.”

It is recommended that you prepare a lineup with fielding positions/rotations for a complete game (e.g., 5 or more innings). Provided a copy to each of your coaches and your scorekeeper. You must also provide the opposing manager with your “line up only.” The lineup and fielding positions/rotations should comply with AVGS rules (e.g., all athletes at an infield position for at least one inning by the completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning; no athlete may sit for more than one inning until all other athletes on your team have sat for an inning; etc.). It is very difficult to re-set a lineup and/or fielding positions/rotations “on the fly” in the course of a game...so please come to a game prepared!

It is recommended that you arrive at least 75 minutes before game time. Athletes should arrive at least one hour before game time. Meet with your coaches ahead of time and map out a good “limited space” warm-up routine that incorporates throwing, fielding and hitting. Consider using whiffle balls or “sanded” balls if possible for hitting to avoid “live hits” onto the field of play of an current game. Do not be afraid to bring a portable music player just to keep the mood light and enjoyable. Keep it simple...but focused on game preparation. You will be permitted to warm-up in the outfield grass on the field side of your dugout for the next game (e.g., home team = third base; visiting team = first base).

It is recommended that pitchers and catchers get early reps in hitting stations to allow for ample time to warm up. Consider having your pitcher start throwing 20-30 minutes before the game starts (with her warm up completed 5-10 minutes before the game starts). Your catcher(s) may gear up as well and assist in warming up pitchers to provide an opportunity to allow the pitcher/catcher to be comfortable together. The goal is to get your pitcher warm, comfortable and confident before she takes the mound. This is not the time to “break things down”—any effort to “break things down” should be done in practice. When your pitcher takes the field she should feel excited to get going and know you (and the team) believe in her.

It is recommended that you educate your team on an “organized dugout” wherein each athlete stores their gear in a way that they have easy access to it. Make sure your dugout coach and/or team parent helps in this endeavor. An organized dugout cuts down on the time the girls are in transition from the field to hitting and vice versa. Post the line up in the dugout so everyone can see it. Take a few moments to explain the line up to the girls and show them where they can find it. Put the dugout coach and/or team parent in charge of making certain the correct athlete is up to bat, on deck and on the bucket (meaning third up for that inning).

On conclusion of the game, gather your team for a cheer for the other team (e.g., “2, 4, 6, 8...who do we appreciate...”). Have your team gather behind your catcher in a single line and shake hands with the opposing team. Thereafter, make certain your athletes quickly gather their equipment and “clean out” the dugout for the next team coming in. It is recommended that you gather your team off the field/nearby and discuss the game. This is your opportunity to praise good play and compliment them on how their practicing is translating over into the game. Keep it short and sweet. Make sure you thank your parents as well as your coaches.

Go home and reflect on the experience. Make small notes of things you thought the girls did well and things they need to work on. Use this information for your next practice and refer to the game when you are doing it so they too can use that information for help.

### ***Working with Parents***

It can be very difficult at times to work with parents. As stated earlier, at the first practice set the expectations for the season. Continue to reiterate expectations throughout the season. A consistent message often times can alleviate any potential issues. If a parent does have a concern, feel free to speak with them. Do it before or after practice—never during practice and never in an email or text. Give them an opportunity to explain their issue with you. Be open-minded and try and see it from their perspective. When it is your turn to respond, do so in a way that is non-confrontational and in a manner that demonstrates your understanding of their position. Do your best to directly answer their question or address their concern. Keep in mind, and hopefully they do too, that you are a volunteer and have the best intentions for all of the athletes on your team.

One of the easiest ways to ensure all parents are satisfied is get everyone involved. Understand you cannot do it alone, so provide an opportunity for everyone to be involved. You may have multiple Assistant Coaches at practices or games, but attempt to find roles for everyone to be involved to the extent desired with the team.

To the extent possible, it is also recommended that your Team Parent attend each practice—providing an additional set of “eyes and ears” for the team.

### ***Working with Athletes***

Working with your athletes will take up most of your time—as a Manager or Coach you are essentially “managing” personalities. Consider the following “tips” on working with athletes::

**SET EXPECTATIONS:** Set the expectations early on. Keep it short and simple and something all of them can remember.

**CORRECT & DIRECT:** Correct and direct, rather than admonish and punish. If an athlete is struggling with a drill, stop the drill and make it a teachable moment.

**DO NOT “CALL OUT”:** Do not call an athlete out in front of their peers. Rather, reiterate how you want the drill to be done. If an athlete continues to struggle, pull them aside during a water break, or before or after practice, and work with them.

Each athlete will have their own unique personality. It is your job to attempt to understand and manage the different personalities on your team. If you have an athlete who has trouble paying attention or at times seems really disruptive, have a quick chat with the athlete during a break. It may be something as simple as: “Remember the team rules, when I’m talking you’re...(get them to respond)...listening.” Here you are getting them to remember the rules you put down the very first practice. In addition, you have allowed the athlete to correct herself, giving the athlete accountability for her actions. If the athlete continues to be disruptive, it is recommended that you communicate with the parents (and the AVGS Board).

## Best Practices

AVGS seeks to ensure the game of softball is coached in a manner allowing for athletes to “seamlessly” transition to the next level of competition. This requires the coaches for each division to focus on teaching their athletes the basic fundamentals necessary for transition to the next level. Each athlete is unique. Each athlete will develop at varying rates. If our coaches are consistent on teaching these following Best Practices along with creating a positive competitive environment, however, the athletes will each develop as both softball players and young ladies.

Depending on the level you are coaching, AVGS offers these guidelines to assist in the construction of effective practice plans designed to enable our athletes to improve through the course of a season. As the girls advance, practices may appear to be the same, but the level of demand will and should increase. It is also our hope that as these “Best Practices” are put in place, each AVGS athlete will develop a sound softball IQ. Physically being able to play the game is one part, the other is mentally understanding how to play the game. The following represents what AVGS understands should be the focus at each Division in order to develop each athlete for the next level of competition. Drills designed to develop the “Best Practices” can be found in our resource library.

### 6U

- Throwing
  - How to hold the softball
  - Basic throwing mechanics
- Fielding
  - How to catch the ball
  - How to field a ground ball
  - Body positioning and basic footwork
  - Where to throw the ball
  - Positions on the field and where they are
- Hitting (Hitting can be taught various ways.)
  - How to hold the bat
  - Basic stance in the batter’s box (e.g., “feet set” – shoulder width; “bat back”; “swing hard”)
    - Know the areas of the batter’s box (front of the box, back of the box)
  - Identify simple terminology for hitters (e.g., swing “shoulder to shoulder”; “chin down”/ “watch the ball”)
- Base Running
  - After you hit the ball, where to run
  - Run through the base (focus on kids running to the orange base and at least 5-7ft past the base veering toward the right)
  - Running base to base

## 8U

- Throwing
  - How to hold the softball
  - Basic throwing mechanics
  - Footwork on throwing toward your target
- Fielding
  - How to catch the ball
  - How to field a ground ball
  - How to field a fly ball
  - Body positioning and basic footwork
  - Where to throw the ball
  - Defensive Positions on the field and where they are
- Hitting (Hitting can be taught various ways.)
  - How to hold the bat
  - Basic stance in the batter's box
    - Know the areas of the batter's box (Up in the box, back of the box)
  - Identify simple terminology for hitters
  - How to Bunt
- Base Running
  - After you hit the ball, where to run
  - Run through the base (focus on kids running to the orange base and at least 5-7ft past the base veering toward the right)
  - Rounding base
  - Leading off
  - Stealing
  - Sliding
  - Running base to base
  - Watching and listening to base coaches
- Pitchers
  - Basic mechanics (e.g., set position; "windmill" motion; "power line"; release/follow through)
  - Focus on throwing strikes
- Catchers
  - Basic mechanics (e.g., foot positioning; target; catching pitch; throw back to pitcher; basic blocking; throw downs to second/third)
  - Focus on working with pitcher (e.g., getting pitcher into a "rhythm")

## 10U

- Throwing
  - Throwing mechanics
  - Footwork on throwing toward/through your target
  - Infield throw – 2<sup>nd</sup>/SS/3<sup>rd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Outfield throw – Hit cutoff + throw 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>/Home – Long toss

- Fielding
  - Body positioning and basic footwork
  - Situations - Defensive Positions on the field and where they should be (e.g., no runners on base; runner on first; runner on first/second; bases loaded)
  - Bunts - covering bases
  - Fly Balls – cutoffs/tag ups
  - Stealing – throw downs to second/third; covering home
  - Live Ball/Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike
- Hitting (Hitting can be taught various ways.)
  - Routine (e.g., time out; set in box; looking to coach between pitches; signs; etc.)
  - Batters Box (e.g., front (1)/middle (2)/back (3) in box)
  - Bunting
- Base Running
  - Run through first base (focus on kids running through the orange base; “breakdown” within 5-7ft past the base OR rounding base; look/listen to first base coach)
  - Running base-to-base (e.g., rounding bases; looking; sliding; finding next base coach; etc.)
  - Leading off
  - Stealing (regular; delayed)
  - Sliding
  - Live Ball/Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike
- Pitchers
  - Basic mechanics (e.g., set position; “windmill” motion; “power line”; release/follow through)
  - Focus on throwing strikes
  - Focus on changing speeds/change up
  - Covering home (e.g., passed ball)
  - Control of Field (e.g., when to stay in circle)
  - Delayed Steals
- Catchers
  - Basic mechanics (e.g., foot positioning; target; catching pitch; throw back to pitcher; basic blocking; throw downs to second/third)
  - Focus on working with pitcher & coach (e.g., getting pitcher into a “rhythm”; taking/giving signs)
  - Passed Balls/Dropped Balls (e.g., dropped third strike – throw down to first; passed ball – toss to pitcher covering home)

## Resource Library

### **Throwing:**

How to throw a ball:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpPh2D1T9iY&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7>

How to throw in the outfield:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKkd1uRYKFA&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7&index=27>

### **Drills:**

Wrist snap Drill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vhIpl-iMBM>

Throwing Progressions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8drv7RrkUNA>

Swim Drill:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZhjYHKoEI>

Softball Throwing drills: One-knee Snaps & The Figure-eight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqbF3nIMKAE&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7&index=2>

### **Fielding:**

How to catch a softball:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOwC9wmhd0Y&index=3&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7>

Softball Catching Drills: Footwork

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOwC9wmhd0Y&index=3&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7>

Fielding a ground ball:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccta-HWnXis&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7&index=9>

Softball Fielding Triangles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BgiappeTZk&index=10&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7>

How to catch a fly ball:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Agwan7HeaSQ&index=11&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7>

How to charge an infield hit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6HarnrsVnU&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7&index=13>

How to crow hop in the outfield:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BP96sZeAgg&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7&index=23>

### **Drills:**

Ground ball work progressions: (Drill everyone should be doing to warm up the infield)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDwFdR4gluQ>

Advanced Defensive drills:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGcPaNZBVwA>

ASA/USA Softball – Foundations of Fielding Part 3-8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwWn9yD6-MQ&list=PL1C123D9B15CCFD40&index=3>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVOpt303vro&list=PL1C123D9B15CCFD40&index=4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGBIJTxlAo&index=5&list=PL1C123D9B15CCFD40>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWNYhd7mkJA&index=6&list=PL1C123D9B15CCFD40>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XhtoGPuhVU&list=PL1C123D9B15CCFD40&index=7>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnDOtFca9VE&list=PL1C123D9B15CCFD40&index=8>

### **Base Running:**

Running to first:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqcDG9\\_oni0&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7&index=22](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqcDG9_oni0&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7&index=22)

Running to first – Rounding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hy5eE4Ac2mk&index=19&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7>



Base running –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVCDvYIF9r0>

**Hitting:** (Hitting is a very specific skill that can be taught in a very basic fashion, however, if you want your player(s) to be sound fundamental hitters, have them get professional lessons.)

How to hit a softball:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfkIEpsFF8w&index=6&list=PL7E1A16641C5085D7>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFXIONfyjek>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4C2kLbkzZg>

